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Report of the Governing Council

Twelfth special session (20-22 February 2012)

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United Nations Environment Programme

Report of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on the work of the twelfth special session

(Nairobi, 20-22 February 2012)

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Note

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Introduction

1. The twelfth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was held in Nairobi from 20 to 22 February 2012. It was convened in pursuance of section I of Governing Council decision 26/17 and paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 on the pattern of conferences, and in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

I. Opening of the session

2. The twelfth special session was opened at 10.35 a.m. on Monday, 20 February 2012, by a representative of the secretariat who served as master of ceremonies.

3. The session began with the performance by a group of children from a number of Kenyan schools of "I have a dream", a song written by the Swedish group Abba in 1972, the year in which UNEP was founded.

4. Opening statements were made by Ms. Graciela Muslera, Minister of Housing, Land Planning and Environment of Uruguay and Acting President of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum; Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, on behalf of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General; Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and the Environment of the Congo, on behalf of Mr. Denis Sassou N'Guesso, President of the Congo, who was unable to attend the session; Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP; and Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya.[1]

II. Organization of work

A. Attendance

5. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented at the session: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia.

[1] A fuller account of the discussions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session, including summaries of the opening and general statements and of the Council/Forum's deliberations on the substantive issues before it, is contained in the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.XII/14).

6. The following States not members of the Governing Council but Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency were represented by observers: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Mali, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

7. Palestine was also in attendance as an observer.

8. The following United Nations bodies, Secretariat units and convention secretariats were represented: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Economic Commission for Africa, secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, International Ecosystem Management Partnership, secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats, secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, secretariat of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, secretariat of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

9. The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Population Fund, World Food Programme, World Meteorological Organization.

10. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Development Bank, African Union Commission, Asian Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, Economic Community of West African States Commission, European Union, Global Environment Facility, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Organization for Migration, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Union for Conservation of Nature, League of Arab States, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Bank.

11. In addition, a number of non-governmental and civil society organizations were represented by observers.

B. Election of officers

12. The term of Hungary as a member of the Governing Council expired on 1 January 2012. As the representative of Hungary had served as Vice-President of the Governing Council, the seat of the Eastern European States fell vacant on that date. Accordingly, at the opening meeting of the special session, on 20 February 2012, the Council/Forum elected Mr. László Borbély (Romania) Vice-President pursuant to rules 18 and 19 of its rules of procedure.

13. In addition, Ms. Rosa Aguilar Rivero (Spain) and Ms. Liana Bratasida (Indonesia) had, since their election at the twenty-sixth session of the Council/Forum, vacated their positions as President and Vice-President of the Bureau, respectively. Accordingly, the Western European and other States nominated Mr. Federico Ramos de Armas (Spain) to serve as President and the Asian and Pacific States nominated Mr. Dana A. Kartakusuma (Indonesia) to serve as Vice-President to complete the terms of Ms. Rivero and Ms. Bratasida.

14. All three officers were elected by acclamation to serve until the twenty-seventh regular session of the Council/Forum, to be held in 2013.

C. Credentials of representatives

15. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of the representatives attending the session. Representatives of 53 of the 57 member States[2] attended the session and their credentials were found to be in order. The Bureau so reported to the Council/Forum, which approved the Bureau's report at the 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February 2012.

D. Agenda

16. At its 1st plenary meeting, on the morning of Monday, 20 February 2012, the Council/Forum adopted the following agenda for the session, on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of work:
   (a) Adoption of the agenda;
   (b) Election of officers;
   (c) Organization of work.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Emerging policy issues: environment and development.

[2] As at 22 February 2012, the seat of the fifty-eighth member of the Council/Forum was vacant.

5. Other matters.

6. Adoption of the report.

7. Closure of the session.

E. Organization of the work of the session

17. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum considered and approved the organization of work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotations to the agenda (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

18. Pursuant to one of those recommendations, it was decided that the Council/Forum would hold ministerial consultations from the afternoon of Monday, 20 February, until the morning of Wednesday, 22 February, under agenda item 4 (emerging policy issues: environment and development). The focus of those consultations would be on the theme "The environmental agenda in the changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)", with three sub-themes: "Environmental change and global responses in 2012", "The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "The institutional framework for sustainable development". The consultations would conclude with discussions on the topic "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges". It was agreed that the ministerial consultations would comprise a blend of plenary meetings, panel discussions and ministerial round-table discussions.

19. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a committee of the whole, to be chaired by Mr. László Borbély (Romania), which would consider agenda items 4 and 5. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a friends of the President group.

20. It was further agreed that the Council/Forum would consider agenda items 3 (credentials of representatives), 6 (adoption of the report) and 7 (closure of the session) during the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Wednesday, 22 February.

21. The Council/Forum agreed that the session would be conducted in what was termed a "papersmart" format, with documents made available electronically and in a limited number of paper copies.

F. Policy statement by the Executive Director

22. At the 1st plenary meeting, the Executive Director delivered a policy statement.[1]

G. Ministerial consultations

23. During the ministerial-level consultations, which were held from the afternoon of 20 February until the morning of 22 February, representatives considered two topics under the overarching theme "The environmental agenda in a changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)". Those two topics were "The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "The institutional framework for sustainable development". Ministers also

participated in a moderated discussion on the theme "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges".

H. Report of the Committee of the Whole

24. The Committee of the Whole held four meetings, from 20 to 22 February 2012, to consider the agenda items assigned to it. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February, the Council/Forum took note of the report of the Committee of the Whole (UNEP/GCSS.XII/14, annex II).

III. Matters requiring the special attention of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council

A. Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

25. By its decision SS.XII/8, the Governing Council adopted a statement in which ministers and heads of delegation congratulated the United Nations Environment Programme on its successes and effective undertakings, in addition to the progress achieved over the past 40 years, welcomed the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as a unique opportunity to tackle economic, social and environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development and committed themselves to making the Conference a success.

B. International environmental governance

26. In its decision SS.XII/3, the Governing Council invited the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide capacity-building framework for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and the possibility of developing a system-wide strategy for the environment.

C. President's summary of the ministerial consultations

27. At the 6th plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the President of the Council/Forum presented a draft summary of the views expressed during the ministerial consultations on each theme considered during the discussion by ministers and heads of delegation. The President's summary is contained in annex II to the present report. It reflects the interactive nature of the dialogue that occurred and the ideas presented and discussed, rather than setting out a consensus view of the participants; hence, it is not a negotiated document.

IV. Adoption of decisions

28. At its 6th plenary meeting, the Council/Forum adopted the following decisions:

Decision No.	Title
SS.XII/1	Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions
SS.XII/2	Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group
SS.XII/3	International environmental governance
SS.XII/4	Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes
SS.XII/5	Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster
SS.XII/6	World environmental situation
SS.XII/7	Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production
SS.XII/8	Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

V. Emerging policy issues: environment and development

29. The agenda item entitled "Emerging policy issues: environment and development" was considered during the ministerial consultations and by the Committee of the Whole (see UNEP/GCSS/XII/14, annex II).

VI. Other matters

Tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya

30. At the invitation of the Chair, the Council/Forum members observed a minute of silence to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya.

VII. Adoption of the proceedings

31. The proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS/XII/14) were adopted by the Council/Forum at its 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February 2012, on the basis of the draft proceedings that had been circulated and on the understanding that the Rapporteur, with the support of the secretariat, would be entrusted with their finalization.

VIII. Closure of the session

32. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was declared closed by the President of the Council/Forum at 7.25 p.m. on Wednesday, 22 February 2012.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session

Decision No.	Title
SS.XII/1	Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions
SS.XII/2	Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group
SS.XII/3	International environmental governance
SS.XII/4	Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes
SS.XII/5	Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster
SS.XII/6	World environmental situation
SS.XII/7	Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production
SS.XII/8	Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

SS.XII/1: Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions

The Governing Council,

Reiterating paragraph 18 of its decision 26/9 of 24 February 2011 as the basis for further work,

Having considered the progress report submitted by the Executive Director on the implementation of paragraph 18 of Governing Council decision 26/9,[1]

1. *Notes* the progress made and action taken by the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide, at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, a report on the full implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9 with a view to examining how to strengthen further the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

3. *Emphasizes* the need to consult further with the relevant multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, the United Nations Board of Auditors, the

[1] UNEP/GCSS.XII/9.

Office of Legal Affairs and all relevant bodies and to include their input and comments, including information on the legal bases of accountability issues and the financial and administrative arrangements, in the report referred to in paragraph 2 above.

SS.XII/2: Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group

The Governing Council,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in enhancing coordination and collaboration across the United Nations system to achieve greater coherence in environmental activities,

Recalling its decision 26/11 of 24 February 2011, on enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group,

Welcoming the efforts of the Executive Director, including in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group, and those of the Group's members, in promoting cooperation across the United Nation system on environmental activities,

Expressing appreciation for the progress report prepared under the guidance of the senior officials of the Group at their seventeenth meeting and presented by the Executive Director,[2]

Commending the Group on its progress in enhancing United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination on specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements,

Welcoming in particular the Group's contribution to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and its decision to continue its support for the drylands agenda across the United Nations system,

Expressing appreciation for the Group's contribution to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development through its reports *Working Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy: A United Nations System-wide Perspective* and "Advancing the environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system",[3]

1. *Supports* the Group's continued efforts to mainstream environmental considerations into activities at the programme, management and operational levels in close cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies;

2. *Encourages* the Group to continue to promote coherence in environmental activities across the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as:

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[2] UNEP/GCSS.XII/10.

[3] To be published on the Group's website at www.unemg.org.

(a) Contributing to the implementation of the international agenda on biodiversity and, in particular, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting;[4]

(b) Preparing for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its eleventh session a United Nations system-wide action plan for the period 2012-2018 on follow-up to its report on drylands;[5]

3. *Also encourages* the Group to continue its consultations on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system and to move towards environmental sustainability management systems and climate neutrality in the United Nations;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the Group to provide a progress report on the Group's work to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh session;

5. *Invites* the Executive Director in his capacity as the Chair of the Group to transmit a progress report on the Group's work to the governing bodies of the Group's member organizations, through the heads of those organizations, for their information;

6. *Also invites* the Executive Director, in the context of the development of the draft programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, to submit, for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, proposals relating to the allocation of resources for the Group's activities to reflect better the workload of the Group secretariat.

SS.XII/3: International environmental governance

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 26/1 of 24 February 2011 on international environmental governance,

Taking note of the implementation by the Executive Director of the incremental reforms that were identified in the set of options presented to the Governing Council at its eleventh special session, in February 2010, by the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance established under Governing Council decision 25/4 of 20 February 2009,[6]

Taking note also of the continuing consultations, in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, on the institutional framework for sustainable development, and considering that international environmental governance is one particularly important component of those consultations,

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[4] Decision X/2, annex.

[5] *Global Drylands: A United Nations System-wide Response*.

[6] UNEP/GCSS.XI/11, annex II.

Recalling the commitment set out in the 2010 Nusa Dua Declaration[7] to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, as set out in the 1997 Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme,[8]

1. *Recognizes* the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions, without prejudice to their specific objectives and recognizing their respective mandates, and encourages the conferences of the parties to those conventions to strengthen efforts further in that regard, taking into account relevant experiences;

2. *Invites* the Executive Director to undertake, as appropriate, further activities to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties, and to enhance cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to explore the opportunities for further synergies in the administrative functions of the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and to provide advice on such opportunities to the governing bodies of those multilateral environmental agreements;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Director to explore the possibility of signing or updating memorandums of understanding with other United Nations bodies, in particular with the specialized agencies and regional commissions, in order to coordinate endeavours by United Nations secretariats, avoid overlapping, enhance cooperation and build on synergies in the implementation of the programmes and policies of those bodies in support of sustainable development;

5. *Recalls* the invitation by the General Assembly to the relevant United Nations funds, and programmes and the specialized agencies and multilateral environmental agreements to consider mainstreaming the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building into their overall activities, and calls upon Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide the funding and technical assistance and capacity-building necessary to advance further and implement fully the Bali Strategic Plan, and invites the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide capacity-building framework for its implementation;

6. *Invites* the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide strategy for the environment;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to instruct and give guidance to the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme to strengthen the cooperation between the Programme and other United Nations bodies, including regional commissions and other regional bodies, and to promote collaboration between the Programme and the secretariats of regional integration organizations in

[7] Ibid., annex I, decision SS.XI/9.

[8] UNEP/GC.19/34, annex I, decision 19/1, annex.

an effort to promote actions pertinent to the environmental dimension of sustainable development;

8. *Encourages* member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, extrabudgetary funding to strengthen the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme.

SS.XII/4: Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision SS.XI/8 of 26 February 2010 and the need for heightened efforts to increase the political priority accorded to the sound management of chemicals and wastes and the increased need for sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing for the chemicals and wastes agenda,

Recalling also that in decision SS.XI/8 it requested the Executive Director to launch, in collaboration with relevant partners, initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes through various avenues, including the media and key international opportunities such as intergovernmental meetings and public events at both the national and international levels,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 65/162 of 20 December 2010, in which the Assembly welcomed the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and expressed support for further efforts through the United Nations Environment Programme to continue such discussions,

Recalling its decision 26/7 of 24 February 2011, in which it requested the Executive Director to submit a final report to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session on the implementation of decisions SS.XI/8 and 26/7,

Recognizing the importance of an integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and wastes to maximize impact, particularly at the national level,

Recalling the financial provisions of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,

Stressing that technology support and capacity-building, along with financial assistance, support the effective implementation of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and obligations under relevant conventions,

Having considered the final report submitted by the Executive Director on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes,[9]

[9] UNEP/GCSS.XII/8.

1. *Welcomes* the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and takes note of its outcome and the final report of the Executive Director;

2. *Takes note* of the co-chairs' summary of the discussions of the contact group on finance and technical assistance convened during the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, held in November 2011,[10] at which the participants considered possible long-term financing options for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, including elements of the integrated approach pertinent to the Strategic Approach;

3. *Encourages* the participants in other processes related to chemicals and wastes, including the International Conference on Chemicals Management, to take into consideration, as appropriate, the integrated approach and the final report of the Executive Director;

4. *Recognizes* that the continuing negotiation of a legally binding instrument on mercury, including its financing mechanisms, is a parallel process that should not be delayed or prejudged by the consultative process on financing options for the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and invites the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury to consider, as appropriate, the outcome document of the consultative process and the final report of the Executive Director;

5. *Encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to consider taking into account the integrated approach, the outcome document and the final report of the Executive Director in preparing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and other high-level international policy processes;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to provide support to the consultative process, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, with a view to elaborating further a final outcome based on the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and wastes;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Director, taking into consideration the outcome document of the consultative process and his final report, to prepare a draft proposal, and to seek advice thereon through a consultative process, for consideration and possible decision at the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in 2012, and at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013;

8. *Further requests* the Executive Director, in collaboration with relevant partners, to continue to raise awareness of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the participants in relevant intergovernmental processes and meetings;

9. *Invites* Governments and other interested parties, including members of the private sector, to provide financial and in-kind support for the consultative process.

[10] UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/8.

SS.XII/5: Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 26/12 of 24 February 2011 on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster,

Recalling also that, in that decision, it requested the Executive Director to provide input to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to present a progress report on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session and a report on the outcome of the consultative process to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh session,

Having considered the progress report submitted by the Executive Director on the implementation of Governing Council decision 26/12,[11]

1. *Notes* the progress made and the activities carried out to date by the Executive Director in the implementation of decision 26/12;

2. *Takes note* of the adoption of decisions BC-10/29, RC-5/12 and SC-5/27 by the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, respectively, on enhancing cooperation and coordination among those conventions;

3. *Reiterates* its request to the Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term;

4. *Urges* Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to contribute extrabudgetary resources for the conduct of the process referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. *Invites* the participants at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to promote recognition of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes for human health and the environment.

SS.XII/6: World environmental situation

The Governing Council,

Pursuing its functions and responsibilities as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and subsequent mandates such as those set out in the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme[12] and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,[13] which

[11] UNEP/GCSS.XII/11.

[12] Governing Council decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997, annex.

[13] UNEP/GCSS.VI/9, annex I.

include the responsibility to keep the world environmental situation under review to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance are prioritized and receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments and to promote the contribution of relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information,

Recalling its decisions 22/1 of 7 February 2003, on early warning, assessment and monitoring, 23/6 of 25 February 2005, on keeping the world environmental situation under review, and 24/2, 25/2 and 26/2, of 9 February 2007, 20 February 2009 and 24 February 2011, respectively, on the world environmental situation,

Taking note of the publication *Keeping Track of Our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20 (1992-2012)*, which is based on the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report and shows how global economic, social and environmental conditions have changed over the 20 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

1. *Welcomes* the progress in preparing the fifth Global Environment Outlook report;

2. *Takes note* of the endorsement of the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report by the representatives of Governments at the intergovernmental meeting held in Gwangju City, Republic of Korea, in January 2012 in accordance with Governing Council decision 25/2;

3. *Notes with great concern* that severe changes have taken place in the environment, ranging from the impact of climate change and the loss of biodiversity and species extinction to the degradation of land and the deterioration of water resources and the oceans;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director, through the programme of work, to continue developing and implementing an outreach strategy for disseminating the findings of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report;

5. *Recognizes* that the transition to sustainable development varies by country and must be addressed by well-governed, effectively managed, innovative, result-oriented institutions able to create appropriate conditions for change;

6. *Stresses* that the United Nations Environment Programme should provide science-based information to support parties and other relevant stakeholders in their transition to sustainable development;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to demonstrate strong leadership individually and collectively, to implement effective policies to monitor, regulate, sustainably manage and improve the environment and ecosystem services and to continue to cooperate within the framework of multilateral processes that aim to prevent and reverse environmental degradation;

8. *Calls upon* Governments, United Nations bodies, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the public at large to work with the United Nations Environment Programme and other environmental institutions to integrate science-based environmental information, including from global, regional and national assessments, into the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;

9. *Calls upon* Governments, in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to assess progress and gaps in the implementation of goals, policies and programmes aimed at tackling environmental degradation so as to facilitate agreement on a way forward;

10. *Recognizes* that there are gaps in our knowledge of the state of the environment resulting from a lack of data and regular monitoring, particularly in areas such as freshwater quality and quantity, groundwater depletion, ecosystem services, loss of natural habitat, land degradation and chemicals and wastes;

11. *Calls upon* Governments and the multilateral system to design and implement programmes for bridging the data gaps referred to above, as appropriate, including by building national and regional capacities and establishing regular processes for data-based environmental monitoring and early warning at the national and local levels, subject to national priorities and policies and the availability of funding;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director to make it a priority for the United Nations Environment Programme to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their capacities to collect and analyse data and information and monitor environmental trends, as stipulated in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and making information available to policymakers and the public in an open access format such as UNEP-Live;

13. *Also requests* the Executive Director, through the programme of work and by working with national and regional environmental authorities, to build capacity and to support technology transfer for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan, with a view to responding to current and future challenges facing humanity:

(a) By partnering with centres of excellence to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the conduct of integrated assessments at the national level to provide compelling evidence for informed decision-making;

(b) By cooperating with the United Nations system and with other bodies to collect environmental data sets, develop and maintain relevant indicators and promote the exchange of best practices in the area of environmental governance;

14. *Takes note* of the outcome of the first Eye on Earth Summit, held from 12 to 15 December 2011 in Abu Dhabi and the commitment of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to facilitating and supporting the special initiatives contained in the Eye on Earth Declaration, in particular the Global Network of Networks Initiative;

15. *Recommends* that coherence continue to be sought between the long-term requirements of UNEP-Live and other components of information systems designed for global and regional environmental assessments and data sharing and that the United Nations Environment Programme, upon request, consider undertaking capacity-building activities to enhance the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the Eye on Earth Summit follow-up process.

SS.XII/7: Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production

The Governing Council,

Stressing the call in Agenda 21[14] for action to promote patterns of consumption and production that reduce environmental stress and meet the basic needs of humanity, and recalling that changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production is one of the overarching objectives of, and an essential requirement for, sustainable development, as stated in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[15]

Recalling its decisions 22/6 of 7 February 2003, on the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns, and 26/5 of 24 February 2011, on a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production,

Recalling also the invitation for support for target 4 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with its Aichi Biodiversity Targets,[16] adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its tenth meeting, held in October 2010, which provides that by 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels will have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable consumption and production and will have kept the impacts of the use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits,

Noting that resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production together constitute one of the six cross-cutting priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013,

Commending the work by the United Nations Environment Programme since the twenty-second session of the Governing Council in advancing sustainable consumption and production,

Welcoming the sustainable consumption and production partnerships and joint initiatives developed through close cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and other regional and United Nations entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Tourism Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other key stakeholders,

Noting the achievements of the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production, a global, multi-stakeholder process launched by Governments and major group initiatives and, with their valuable support, implemented in all regions

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[14] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

[15] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[16] UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2.

with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is playing a key role in providing input for the elaboration of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production called for in chapter III of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was considered by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development during its 2010-2011 implementation cycle,

Recognizing the valuable support for the Marrakech Process provided by Governments and major groups,

Noting that, while the 2010-2011 cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development did not result in the adoption of a decision on sustainable consumption and production, it did indicate the readiness of the international community to take action to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production, its readiness to establish a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production and its support for the continuation and reinforcement of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in the area of sustainable consumption and production,

Acknowledging that further progress in achieving sustainable consumption and production requires a more coherent and sustained approach and the provision of tools, information and capacity-building for mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production at all levels,

Recognizing that consumption and production are central to global and national economic activity and that the promotion of sustainable consumption and production, based on life-cycle approaches, including resource efficiency and sustainable use of resources, is therefore required to achieve sustainable development,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of sustainable consumption and production to the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, and requests the Executive Director to enhance support for the development and implementation of the resource efficiency/sustainable consumption and production subprogramme, which encompasses and contributes to work by the United Nations Environment Programme on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide support for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements that focuses on the implementation of sustainable consumption and production plans at the national level;

3. *Encourages* Governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to enhance efforts to shift to sustainable consumption and production, particularly in sectors with high environmental and social impact, including through corporate environmental and social responsibility;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to undertake activities on sustainable consumption and production in the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme, taking into account those responsibilities identified in the text elaborated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its nineteenth

session, in line with the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy and within available resources;

5. *Calls upon* the Executive Director, with the cooperation of member States, to make use of the scientific and policy knowledge base and relevant international science policy mechanisms, including the International Resource Panel;

6. *Invites* Governments to support the adoption of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production elaborated by the relevant working group of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;[17]

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit a report on sustainable consumption and production in the light of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session, in 2013.

SS.XII/8: Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council

Adopts the following statement:

1. We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Ministerial Environment Forum, met in Nairobi from 20 to 22 February 2012 for the twelfth special session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme in 1972.

2. We congratulate the United Nations Environment Programme on its successes and effective undertakings, in addition to the progress that has been achieved over the past 40 years, including the establishment of important multilateral environmental agreements, the development of environmental laws and policies, the findings of key scientific assessments and the stronger awareness of environmental issues at all levels.

3. We recall our commitment to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, as set out in the 1997 Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme.

4. We recognize that we depend on natural systems and resources for our existence and, the successes of the United Nations Environment Programme notwithstanding, we are deeply concerned about continued environmental degradation, which poses a threat to the natural systems and resources on which we depend.

[17] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 29* (E/2011/29), chap. II., sect. E.

5. We recognize the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report as an important synthesis of scientific information on environment for policymakers and decision-makers about freshwater, biodiversity, climate change, land, chemicals and wastes, energy and oceans and seas.

6. We will therefore continue to strengthen our actions to reverse environmental degradation, to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development and to contribute to the conservation of the essential natural resources and ecosystems on which our economies and societies depend.

7. We welcome the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 as a unique opportunity to tackle economic, social and environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development and we commit ourselves to making the Conference a success.

Annex II

President's summary of the discussions by ministers and heads of delegation at the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is the United Nations high-level environmental policy forum. It brings the world's environment ministers together to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

2. The Council/Forum provides broad policy advice and guidance with the aim, among others, of promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment.

3. The twelfth special session of the Council/Forum was held from 20 to 22 February 2012 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The ministerial consultations during the twelfth special session focused on emerging policy issues under the overall theme "The environmental agenda in the changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)". The session also provided the opportunity to mark the fortieth anniversary of UNEP.

4. The twelfth special session of the Council/Forum included:

(a) High-level symposium entitled "Environmental change and global responses in 2012";

(b) Parallel ministerial round-table discussions on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;

(c) Parallel ministerial round-table discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development;

(d) Discussion on "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges".

5. In addition, the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum included:

(a) Dialogue with former executive directors of UNEP entitled "1972-2012: a review of the evolution of global environmental policy and institutional architecture";

(b) Dialogue with the secretariat and members of the Bureau of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;

(c) Discussion of the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing.

6. The consultations were informed by three papers prepared as background for the participants, the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report and the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum.

7. The present President's summary identifies some of the main challenges and opportunities that were discussed by ministers and other heads of delegation with regard to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

8. The summary is a reflection of the interactive dialogue that occurred between the ministers and other heads of delegation attending the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum. It reflects the ideas presented and discussed rather than a consensus view of participants; hence it is not a negotiated document.

I. Overarching theme: the environmental agenda in a changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)

A. Environmental change and global responses

9. The first session of the ministerial consultations, entitled "Environmental change and global responses in 2012", provided an opportunity for structured dialogue and reflection on the current state of the environment with regard to internationally agreed goals, metrics for sustainable development and preliminary action-oriented proposals to inform the subsequent sessions on the themes "The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "The institutional framework for sustainable development".

10. In opening remarks, ministers and their delegations were informed that all evidence pointed to continuing environmental deterioration, including an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss, and that greenhouse-gas emissions remained the most significant risk to sustainable development. To be successful, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would therefore need to focus on priority issues across the most critical sectors, including water, agriculture and energy, and result in agreement on specific steps forward in terms of the policies needed.

11. Delegations then heard a presentation on key findings and recommendations presented in the summary for policymakers of the Fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report, which was released as a prelude to the full report. The summary, which was negotiated and endorsed by the Governments that were present at a meeting held in the Republic of Korea on 31 January 2012, warns of the continued deterioration of the global environment, pointing out that internationally agreed goals have been only partially met. It calls for policies that focus on the underlying drivers of environmental change rather than concentrate solely on reducing environmental pressures or symptoms.

12. Recommendations in the summary include the use of timely and accurate data to inform decision-making; the reversal of policies that generate unsustainable outcomes; the creation of incentives to advance sustainable practices; urgent cooperative action by Governments to meet internationally agreed goals; the strengthening of access to information; and the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other relevant actors in policymaking processes. The summary also includes examples of policies and practices that can be scaled up in all regions to help countries meet internationally agreed goals.

> *"You cannot control what you cannot measure: there is a need for consistent time-series data and assessment."*

13. The ensuing panel discussion, which sought to extend these presentations and link the messages to the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development, dealt with such issues as bridging the data gap and improving access to information, key

requirements for supporting the establishment of more effective environmental goals, and how to adapt the current model for economic growth to realize sustainable development.

14. Panellists proposed sustainability as a social value, noting that democracy was a prerequisite for sustainable development, and called for an inclusive green economy approach. On access to information, they argued that availability and access to data was critical for decision-making and priority-setting, but noted that information was currently fragmented across a wide array of sources. There was therefore a need for institutional cooperation to bridge the data gap and share information using the latest technologies, tools and platforms. One such tool is the new global public information service Eye on Earth, launched in Abu Dhabi in December 2011, which is aimed at building a dynamic global source of information through the integration of disparate data sources, supported by a network of networks. International and national institutions, along with the private sector, were encouraged to join the new service.

15. It was also noted that data needed to be generated transparently and on a timely basis and made available to those who needed it most. The Conference on Sustainable Development could support such a process through agreement on enhanced and intensified capacity-building, including the widespread dissemination of best practices and assistance to countries for implementing them. Capacity-building efforts, however, should not only reflect global and national issues, but also acknowledge local contexts and specificities. The Conference should also result in a call for increased investments in education, research and knowledge-generation.

B. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

1. Key points

16. The upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to discuss and deliver an action-oriented outcome on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

17. A green economy is viewed as a pathway to or tool for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication and decent job creation by increasing resource efficiency, supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns and facilitating low-carbon development. These efforts will need to be tailored to specific national and local circumstances.

18. The challenges to a green economy transition are varied and many, especially in developing countries. The potential opportunities for integrating the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development through the green economy approach are, however, considerable.

19. Realizing opportunities and overcoming challenges requires the participation of all stakeholders, locally tailored initiatives and international support for developing countries in the areas of financing, technology and capacity-building. Most important, a green economy must be pro-poor, inclusive and socially equitable, generating benefits for all within planetary boundaries.

2. Challenges

20. The first and foremost challenge that Governments, major groups and other stakeholders face is to improve their understanding of the green economy approach to sustainable development and poverty eradication. There are also concerns over unrestrained market and private sector control of natural resources or the risk of trade protectionism in the name of a green economy. These concerns, if unaddressed or addressed in an unsatisfactory manner, will prevent the uptake of the approach. Greater efforts are needed to promote open dialogue among Governments, major groups and other stakeholders, beyond environmental circles, on the way to the Conference on Sustainable Development and beyond. This includes more public awareness-raising and localized definitions, examples and best practices relating to the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

21. In many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, where there is already interest in and commitment to applying the green economy approach, major challenges include a lack of financial resources to invest in a green economy transition, a lack of access to appropriate and affordable technologies, a lack of access, especially by landlocked and mountainous countries, to external markets for their environment-friendly products and a lack of institutional capacity.

22. At the policy level, the most significant challenge is for Governments to provide a level playing field through appropriate and reliable regulatory frameworks, the reform of fiscal policies such as subsidies and taxes and the stimulation of green investment. This is not simple, however, as there are powerful vested interests that benefit from the status quo. Without substantial political will, green economy efforts may not survive the opposition of these interests. In such a case, significant resources will continue to flow into inefficient, inequitable and unsustainable use of natural resources, reducing the resources available for poverty reduction, education and health.

> *"It is not a question of whether we can afford a green economy, but whether we can afford not to have one."*

23. Another major policy challenge is to ensure a fair, just and socially inclusive green economy transition. The green economy approach will necessarily involve the transformation of economic structure, which will create winners and losers. If there is a lack of proactive labour policy and social protection, there will be strong resistance to a green economy transition. More important, it will defeat one of the major objectives of greening the economy — to improve human well-being and social equity.

24. These challenges to the implementation of the green economy approach, however, must be overcome in order to address much larger developmental and environmental challenges, including persistent poverty, food security, high unemployment and poor-quality jobs, unsustainable natural resource use and climate change and its impacts on developing countries.

3. Opportunities

25. The green economy approach is expected to bring benefits not only in environmental terms, but also in social and economic terms. Investing in renewable energies and the greening of the construction sector, for example, have been shown

to have the potential to create new jobs and new markets while improving health benefits and reducing climate change risks and impacts. Improved ecosystems, energy security and sustainable agriculture are also important, especially for poverty reduction in developing countries. Many activities under the green economy approach can provide new opportunities for women to become key players in local economies, especially in the energy, land management and water sectors.

26. One particular opportunity that the green economy approach can offer is support for a shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns. By encouraging the redirection of investment into related activities, the green economy approach helps reinforce the case for this shift to sustainable consumption and production with not only environmental justification, but also social and economic justification.

"What is needed is the political will to act and to act now."

27. Redirecting investment is possible. There are national-level examples of collecting environmental and natural resource taxes, reforming subsidy and tax policies, with the aim of ensuring that the revenue collected is used for green and sustainable initiatives, and redirecting public funds into environmental investments in the form of loans and credits. There are also experiences of swapping debt for environmental spending and using public procurement to incentivize the green economy transition by the business sector.

28. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will provide a historic opportunity for all stakeholders to strengthen governance at both the national and international levels, to cultivate shared objectives and to take collective action. The involvement of key actors and coordinated action is important to ensure that the green economy is socially inclusive and engages Governments at all levels, civil society and the private sector. In addition, the discussions on green economy road maps, national green economy strategies, sustainable development goals, the development of a knowledge-sharing platform, the creation of an institutional framework and a compendium of commitments are important in the lead-up to the Conference. These activities and consultation processes are providing the space for all stakeholders, including the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations, to explore new ways of working together.

4. Key points

29. The green economy is a pathway to achieving fair, equitable and sustainable development and poverty eradication. For the green economy to work, however, it must respect the Rio principles and other important concepts, including social and environmental justice among and within countries. In addition, each country should have its own green economy models tailored to national and local development aspirations, priorities, circumstances and stages of technological development.

30. A green economy transition requires first and foremost a participatory process in which all stakeholders — Governments at the national and local levels, businesses, civil society, local communities, small agricultural producers, women and young people — are fully empowered and engaged in setting goals and targets, defining policies and instruments and taking action to shift to sustainable consumption and production. The major groups and stakeholders, especially women

and young people, are assets in designing enabling conditions for achieving sustainable development.

"To succeed in a green economy we will need green heads (for ideas), green hearts (for commitment) and green hands (for action)."

31. In addition, there is a need for strategies and policies to be comprehensive and undertaken across Government agencies. It is important to focus on removing barriers to a green economy transition and aligning existing policies, budgets and investments across sectors.

32. The international community has the obligation to support developing countries in their green economy transitions. Support is needed in the area of financial resources, clean technologies, public awareness, peacebuilding, capacity-building, including skills training, and the development of institutional and regulatory frameworks. In addition, the international community should resist trade protectionism and conditionality on development assistance disguised as green economy measures. It should provide support for market access, allowing green goods and services to expand in volume. On technology, it is important to recognize the role of indigenous knowledge and technologies, such as those used in mountain and agricultural communities, and of culture and ethics in fostering sustainable behaviours.

33. UNEP has an important role to play in providing much-needed international support to developing countries, such as through the sharing of lessons, knowledge, best practices and operational models of a green economy across various sectors and levels of society. Another major area of support is the facilitation of the setting of goals based on existing international commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals. Targets for gender mainstreaming should also be concluded. This also includes work to better measure well-being, progress and prosperity beyond gross domestic product, covering all three pillars of sustainability.

"We need to make sure that the future we want is the future that we get."

34. The Conference on Sustainable Development must be an event of hope and action and not merely a statement of aspirations. It should be bold and result in the urgent delivery of a strong framework for action with measurable goals and indicators, providing the foundation for an adaptable, flexible and customized approach to achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

C. Institutional framework for sustainable development

1. Major points raised

35. While the contribution of UNEP to sustainable development was recognized, there was overwhelming support for the view that urgent change is needed in the current system of international environmental governance. Incremental reform has been too slow and has not addressed the nature or the severity of environmental issues facing the world, but there remain questions as to the exact architecture of a reformed environmental governance system.

36. The way in which sustainable development has been addressed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 has been

inadequate. Many multilateral environmental agreements have been adopted and programmes established, but there is a lack of financial resources, adequate monitoring and review mechanisms to support implementation.

37. The strengthening of the environmental component of the institutional framework for sustainable development found broad support among the ministers and other heads of delegation. Many expressed support for the establishment of a specialized agency for the environment. Others expressed support for strengthening UNEP but suggested that changing UNEP to a specialized agency could weaken it.

38. There was general agreement that "time is not on our side". The Conference on Sustainable Development must result in quick and immediate action to respond to the current environmental crisis. Speakers stressed that there should be a clear decision on the institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance.

2. Challenges

"There is a crying need to put some order into international environmental governance."

39. The current system of international environmental governance is fragmented, weak and incoherent; it lacks leadership and is characterized by the inefficient use of resources. In a world of scarce resources, a strengthened structure for the environment needs to combine various sources of financing. There is an urgent need to forge a stronger link between global environmental policy and global environmental financing.

40. There is agreement that sustainable governance needs to be strengthened, but participants expressed uncertainty about how the three pillars could best be integrated and balanced. There was concern that each of the three pillars of sustainable development should be given equal strength.

3. Opportunities

"The window of opportunity only opens once in a while. Today we find ourselves far short of what is needed."

41. Reform of the system should address the current shortcomings and may include: an anchor organization with universal membership; improving the science-policy interface; providing guidance to and coordinating multilateral environmental agreements; enhanced synergies within multilateral environmental agreement clusters to increase their effectiveness and efficiency; and the development of a United Nations system-wide strategy for the environment that sets priorities, decides on the division of labour , assigns roles to relevant actors and links private investment and public policy. The establishment of a system of assessed contributions for the international environmental governance anchor institution would increase the total volume of available resources.

42. Synergies between multilateral environmental agreements afford an opportunity to realize the more efficient use of resources and to tackle environmental issues more effectively at the national and international levels and in delivering on the ground, among other things. In addition to seeking to make administrative savings, Governments should also look at opportunities for

programmatic synergies, which can bring even greater benefits. A strengthened UNEP could focus on supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, assist multilateral environmental agreements in gaining access to financing from the Global Environment Facility and enable biodiversity-related and other multilateral environmental agreements to use capacity-building mechanisms through the intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, when established, for their parties.

43. The Conference on Sustainable Development represents a unique window of opportunity to strengthen UNEP through better capacity-building and sustained funding. An important measure for securing sufficient, predictable and coherent funding is the establishment of a stronger link between global environmental policymaking and financing.

44. Local authorities are already closely involved in issues relating to sustainable development; their enhanced participation in global policymaking and the implementation of international decisions at the local level can therefore substantially enhance sustainable development.

45. One opportunity to incorporate human rights and enhance the principles of equity in the institutional framework for sustainable development could be pursued through the creation of an ombudsperson for future generations, at both the international and national levels, equipped with sufficient resources to fulfil that role.

46. There is a need to improve the participation of major groups and stakeholders in decision-making processes and national implementation with a view to improving accountability and transparency as one key issue for sustainable development. This could be achieved through a global instrument implementing principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and through the reform of the governance of existing bodies.

4. Key points

"The time for action has come."

47. One proposal highlighted the need for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to adopt a decision on international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

48. There is a need to put in place promptly a strengthened international environmental governance system, with a strong mandate and political visibility, able to fulfil the key functions that are needed to address the environmental challenges that the world faces today.

49. In order to preserve the environment for current and future generations, it is necessary to transcend national interests and select what is best for the global community.

II. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and beyond: responding to the challenges

Key points

50. All three pillars of sustainable development are intertwined like a three-dimensional helix structure, and environment is a key integrating link. Sustainable development must integrate the three pillars into one agenda with strong bonds such that it does not break down.

51. Environment ministers alone cannot implement the sustainable development agenda. There is a great need to engage with finance, planning and development ministries and persuade them that an inclusive green economy is necessary for economic development.

52. A smooth transition to a green economy will lead to smart development that includes safeguards to protect vulnerable communities and ensure socially inclusive growth.

53. Our collective measure of wealth must go beyond GDP to include environmental and social dimensions to capture human well-being more accurately.

54. A new institutional infrastructure should be based on functional needs. We must take a fresh look at the role of civil society. We need to move out of our comfort zone and better engage the private sector in decision-making processes.

55. UNEP must be strengthened, including through universal membership and sustainable financing.

56. We need to remove our mental "square brackets" at the Conference on Sustainable Development so that we can take advantage of the opportunities to move forward on the sustainable development of the entire planet for all people in an equitable way.

57. It is a fundamentally different world from the world of 1992. New interconnectivity technologies allow us to tap into the knowledge and imagination of a wider and broader set of actors. At the Conference, Governments must commit themselves to robust accountability, including by establishing specific monitoring mechanisms such as an early warning system that will alert us to problems in implementation. Decision-making must be more transparent.

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